

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 1           1. A method of managing a supply chain within a multi-enterprise environment  
2 via a computer network, said multi-enterprise environment including a manufacturing  
3 enterprise and at least one supply chain entity, comprising:  
4           loading a bill of material file into said computer network;  
5           processing said bill of material file;  
6           generating a bid request from said bill of material file;  
7           transmitting said bid request to a web site;  
8           receiving at least one bid response by said at least one supply chain entity;  
9           analyzing said bid response;  
10          generating an award notice;  
11          transmitting said award notice to said at least one supply chain entity, based upon  
12 results of said analyzing; wherein costs of items provided by said at least one supply  
13 chain entity are compared to costs available to said manufacturing enterprise; and  
14          tracking selected activities in a log.
- 1           2. The method of claim 1, wherein said processing said bill of material file  
2 includes mapping items contained in said bill of material file from said manufacturing  
3 enterprise with items provided by external sources via said network.

1           3. The method of claim 2, wherein said items contained in said bill of material  
2 file include:

3           at least one component number;  
4           at least one component name;  
5           at least one component description;  
6           at least one component price; and  
7           at least one component availability.

1           4. The method of claim 2, wherein said items provided by said external sources  
2 include:

3           at least one component number;  
4           at least one component name;  
5           at least one component description;  
6           at least one component price; and  
7           at least one component availability.

1           5. The method of claim 2, wherein said external sources include:  
2 a database of said manufacturing enterprise;  
3 a data warehouse; and  
4 a technical manual.

1           6. The method of claim 1, wherein said processing said bill of material file  
2 includes automatically transmitting notifications to an administrative entity of said  
3 manufacturing enterprise via said network.

1           7. The method of claim 1, wherein said network is an extranet.

1           8. The method of claim 1, wherein said analyzing said bid response includes  
2 comparing data contained in said bill of material file with data contained in said bid  
3 response.

1           9. The method of claim 1, wherein said supply chain entity is a contract  
2 manufacturer.

1           10. The method of claim 1, wherein said supply chain entity is a supplier.

1           11. A method of managing a supply chain within a multi-enterprise environment  
2 via a computer network, said multi-enterprise environment including a manufacturing  
3 enterprise and at least one supply chain entity, comprising:

4           loading a bill of material file into said computer network;

5           processing said bill of material file;

6           generating a bid request from said bill of material file;

7           transmitting said bid request to a web site;

8           receiving at least one bid response by said at least one supply chain entity;

9           analyzing said bid response;

10          generating an award notice;

11          transmitting said award notice to said at least one supply chain entity, based upon  
12 results of said analyzing; wherein costs of items provided by said at least one supply  
13 chain entity are compared to costs available to said manufacturing enterprise; and

14          tracking selected activities in a log;

15          wherein said processing said bill of material file includes associating physical  
16 attributes of components listed on said bill of material file with corresponding business  
17 attributes of said components.

1           12. The method of claim 11, wherein said processing said bill of material file  
2 includes mapping items contained in said bill of material file from said manufacturing  
3 enterprise with items provided by external sources via said network.

1           13. The method of claim 12, wherein said items contained in said bill of material  
2 file include:

3           at least one component number;  
4           at least one component name;  
5           at least one component description;  
6           at least one component price; and  
7           at least one component availability.

1           14. The method of claim 12, wherein said items provided by said external sources  
2 include:

3           at least one component number;  
4           at least one component name;  
5           at least one component description;  
6           at least one component price; and  
7           at least one component availability.

1           15. The method of claim 12, wherein said external sources include:  
2 a database of said manufacturing enterprise;  
3 a data warehouse; and  
4 a technical manual.

1           16. The method of claim 11, wherein said processing said bill of material file  
2 includes automatically transmitting notifications to an administrative entity of said  
3 manufacturing enterprise via said network.

1           17. The method of claim 11, wherein said network is an extranet.

1           18. The method of claim 11, wherein said analyzing said bid response includes  
2 comparing data contained in said bill of material file with data contained in said bid  
3 response.

1           19. The method of claim 11, wherein said supply chain entity is a contract  
2 manufacturer.

1           20. The method of claim 11, wherein said supply chain entity is a supplier.

1           21. The method of claim 11, wherein said business attributes include a price  
2 masked component.

1           22. The method of claim 11, wherein said business attributes include a  
2 consignment component.

1           23. The method of claim 11, wherein said business attributes include a buy off  
2 contract.

1           24. The method of claim 11, wherein said business attributes include a direct  
2 rebate plan.

1           25. A system for managing supply chain functions within a multi-enterprise  
 2 environment, the system comprising:  
 3           a manufacturing enterprise including:  
 4           a host system; said host system including a web server, an applications  
 5 server and a database manager; wherein said web server, said applications server and said  
 6 database manager are in communication with each other;  
 7           a security device for determining access to said host system;  
 8           an A-Source application executable by said applications server;  
 9           a bridging application in communication with said A-Source application;  
 10          at least one computer terminal in communication with said web server;  
 11          a network connecting the web server to said terminal;  
 12          a data storage device, said data storage device in communication with said  
 13 host system;  
 14          a supplier enterprise including:  
 15          at least one terminal;  
 16          a network connecting said terminal with said security means, and  
 17          a local data storage device, said local data storage device in  
 18 communication with said terminal; and  
 19          a contract manufacturer enterprise including:  
 20          at least one terminal;  
 21          a network connecting said terminal with said security means, and  
 22          a local data storage device, said local data storage device in  
 23 communication with said terminal;  
 24          wherein said manufacturing enterprise system is in communication with  
 25 said supplier enterprise system and said contract manufacturer system.

1           26. The system of claim 25, wherein said security device is a firewall.

1           27. The system of claim 25, wherein said manufacturing enterprise and said  
2           supplier enterprise communicate via the Internet.

1           28. The system of claim 25, wherein said manufacturing enterprise and said  
2           supplier enterprise communicate via an extranet.

1           29. A storage medium with machine-readable computer program code for  
2           managing a supply chain within a multi-enterprise environment via a computer network,  
3           said multi-enterprise environment including a manufacturing enterprise and at least one  
4           supply chain entity, the storage medium including instructions for causing a computer to  
5           implement a method, comprising:

6           loading a bill of material file into said computer network;

7           processing said bill of material file;

8           generating a bid request from said bill of material file;

9           transmitting said bid request to a web site;

10          receiving at least one bid response by said at least one supply chain entity;

11          analyzing said bid response;

12          generating an award notice;

13          transmitting said award notice to said at least one supply chain entity, based upon

14          results of said analyzing; wherein costs of items provided by said at least one supply

15          chain entity are compared to costs available to said manufacturing enterprise; and

16          tracking selected activities in a log.

1           30. The storage medium of claim 29, wherein said processing said bill of material  
2           file includes mapping items contained in said bill of material file from said manufacturing  
3           enterprise with items provided by external sources via said network.

1           31. The storage medium of claim 30, wherein said items contained in said bill of  
2 material file include:

3           at least one component number;  
4           at least one component name;  
5           at least one component description;  
6           at least one component price; and  
7           at least one component availability.

1           32. The storage medium of claim 30, wherein said items provided by said  
2 external sources include:

3           at least one component number;  
4           at least one component name;  
5           at least one component description;  
6           at least one component price; and  
7           at least one component availability.

1           33. The storage medium of claim 30, wherein said external sources include:

2           a database of said manufacturing enterprise;  
3           a data warehouse; and  
4           a technical manual.

1           34. The storage medium of claim 29, wherein said processing said bill of material  
2 file includes automatically transmitting notifications to an administrative entity of said  
3 manufacturing enterprise via said network.

1           35. The storage medium of claim 29, wherein said network is an extranet.



1           36. The storage medium of claim 29, wherein said analyzing said bid response  
2 includes comparing data contained in said bill of material file with data contained in said  
3 bid response.

1           37. The storage medium of claim 29, wherein said supply chain entity is a  
2 contract manufacturer.

1           38. The storage medium of claim 29, wherein said supply chain entity is a  
2 supplier.

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1           39. A storage medium with machine-readable computer program code for  
2 managing a supply chain within a multi-enterprise environment via a computer network,  
3 said multi-enterprise environment including a manufacturing enterprise and at least one  
4 supply chain entity, the storage medium including instructions for causing a computer to  
5 implement a method, comprising:

6           loading a bill of material file into said computer network;

7           processing said bill of material file;

8           generating a bid request from said bill of material file;

9           transmitting said bid request to a web site;

10          receiving at least one bid response by said at least one supply chain entity;

11          analyzing said bid response;

12          generating an award notice;

13          transmitting said award notice to said at least one supply chain entity, based upon  
14 results of said analyzing; wherein costs of items provided by said at least one supply  
15 chain entity are compared to costs available to said manufacturing enterprise; and

16          tracking selected activities in a log;

17          wherein said processing said bill of material file includes associating physical  
18 attributes of components listed on said bill of material file with corresponding business  
19 attributes of said components.

1           40. The storage medium of claim 39, wherein said processing said bill of material  
2 file includes mapping items contained in said bill of material file from said manufacturing  
3 enterprise with items provided by external sources via said network.

1           41. The storage medium of claim 40, wherein said items contained in said bill of  
2 material file include:

3           at least one component number;  
4           at least one component name;  
5           at least one component description;  
6           at least one component price; and  
7           at least one component availability.

1           42. The storage medium of claim 40, wherein said items provided by said  
2 external sources include:

3           at least one component number;  
4           at least one component name;  
5           at least one component description;  
6           at least one component price; and  
7           at least one component availability.

1           43. The storage medium of claim 40, wherein said external sources include:

2           a database of said manufacturing enterprise;  
3           a data warehouse; and  
4           a technical manual.

1           44. The storage medium of claim 39, wherein said processing said bill of material  
2 file includes automatically transmitting notifications to an administrative entity of said  
3 manufacturing enterprise via said network.

1           45. The storage medium of claim 39, wherein said network is an extranet.

1           46. The storage medium of claim 39, wherein said analyzing said bid response

1 includes comparing data contained in said bill of material file with data contained in said  
2 bid response.

1 47. The storage medium of claim 39, wherein said supply chain entity is a  
2 contract manufacturer.

1 48. The storage medium of claim 39, wherein said supply chain entity is a  
2 supplier.

1 49. The storage medium of claim 39, wherein said business attributes include a  
2 price masked component.

1 50. The storage medium of claim 39, wherein said business attributes include a  
2 consignment component.

1 51. The storage medium of claim 39, wherein said business attributes include a  
2 buy off contract.

1 52. The storage medium of claim 39, wherein said business attributes include a  
2 direct rebate plan.